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# A GREAT QUESTION ASKED ?

BY REV. JNO. S. GRASTY—FINCASTLE.

That question, oh ! sinner is simply this, *why will you die ?* The Prophet, in the present instance, speaks not of bodily dissolution, but of a death spiritual and eternal—a death that never dies ! Why will the sinner lie down in everlasting burnings ?

1. Is it because no provision has been made for life ? Not at all. The word is, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief. He that believeth, though he were dead, yet shall he live again. Is it for lack of invitation ? Surely this is not the reason ? *Every class* is invited. Are any poor, then hearken to the words of the Master, when He had opened the Book and found the place where it was written, the spirit of the Lord is upon me because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, &c. Are any rich, then let them take courage as they call to

mind the cases of Zaccheus and Joseph of Arimathea. Those in the morning of life are invited. I love them that love me and they that seek me shall find me. But the old too are not forgotten, for the householder goes out even at the eleventh hour to enquire if there are any that be idle and if he finds such in the market place or elsewhere, he bids even these to enter into His vineyard and work. How gentle are His words to any who are afflicted and sorrowful, come unto *me* all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. The invitation is to *all*. Ho! every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price. Christianity differs from every false religion in this; that its invitations are universal, while its remedies are applicable to all countries and to every class.

2. The exhortation is *urgent*. *Why will you die!* The pulpit asks this question every Sabbath, and the spirit of God, like a still small voice, follows us everywhere, both in solitude and society, and its question all the while is, *why* will you die? The worth of truth again is full of solemn warnings, it is sharper than a two edged sword, and added to all this is the ever recurring

Providence of God. Our Heavenly Father tries His mercies first and then come health and strength and food and gladness, but if His bounties fail, afflictions and the rod are visited upon us. We are made to feel that sin is an evil thing and a bitter. The Church of God, once more, adds her testimony, she cries unto those who are ready to perish, come thou with us and we will do you good, for the Lord God hath spoken good concerning Israel. The Saviour Himself exhorts us. I am the way and the truth and the life. He points to His obedience, sufferings and resurrection. He tells us of the worm that dies not and the fire that is not quenched. He lifts the everlasting veil and bids us hearken to the voice of a ruined soul. He then turns upon us again with the question—*why will you die?*

3. But is not salvation afar off. A thing of much mystery—a matter for long pilgrimages and wasting toil! Not at all—not at all! Simplicity itself describes the whole scheme—it is a *look*, one single heart cry to God. *Just where you are and just as you are, cast all upon Jesus and you are saved!* Say not in thy heart who shall ascend into heaven, that is to bring Christ down from above, or who shall descend into the deep, that is to bring up Christ again from the dead; but what saith it, the word is nigh thee even in thy mouth and in thy heart, that is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou

shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. But shall I not wait for a revival, for a season more favorable than the present. The answer is peremptorily: Wait not a moment, *now* is the accepted time, now is *the day* of salvation. It matters not if it be the crowded city or the solitary country or the deadly battle field, the place is nothing, only look up with thy heart to Christ and salvation is sure. *Then why will you die.* Is it because death has more advantages than life? Is sin preferable to holiness—is Hell a sweeter home for eternity than Heaven. Can we exist more gloriously apart from God than when dwelling in His blissful presence. Is our own strength sufficient for the trials that await us!—*Then why will we die.*

Why will you die. Sinner, shall we answer the question for you. If we speak the truth be not offended. Our answer is, ye do not desire to be saved. The guilty one does not wish for life. Said the Saviour, oh! Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that were sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings and ye would not. The sinner perishes, not because he is *reprobated* nor because Christ's atonement is insufficient, nor because he is ignorant and uninvited, but he perishes *simply and solely* because he is a sinner and because he *WILLS* to be such.—The lost company in hell is composed of those who *would* not come to Christ that they might have life. THEN SINNER WHY WILL YOU DIE.

# FAITH AND WORKS.

BY REV. JNO. S. GRASTY.

There are certain texts in the sacred Scriptures, which to a superficial reader, seem to contradict each other. In one place the Bible says, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock and the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house and it fell not for it was founded upon a rock. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.— Show me thy faith without thy works and I will show thee my faith by my works.— For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done whether it be good or bad. On the other hand the Bible tells us that we are saved by grace, through faith and that not of ourselves, for it is the gift of God. The Apostle informs us that boasting is excluded and that by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight.

He that believeth on the Son hath life. In a word, we are *justified by faith*.

Now, do the Scriptures really contradict themselves. By no means! In this celestial volume all is harmony. Faith has its place and so have works. We are justified by the one while we are judged by the other. The Apostle James does not preach a new or contradictory doctrine when he says, faith without works is dead--show me thy faith without thy works and I will show thee my faith by my works. He only means to reassert and establish the connection between the two. It is the old idea of the tree and its fruit, the vine and its branches, brought before our minds in yet another form. If a man has faith there is a way to demonstrate it, that way is by works. Hereby we ascertain and are assured of the faith of Abraham. He offered up Isaac, accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead. Abraham's works illustrated his faith, proved its existence and demonstrated its genuineness. And this corresponds with the words of our Saviour, when He says, by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye *do* whatsoever I command you. Faith is the instrumental condition of justification, it is a saving grace.

whereby we receive and rest upon Jesus Christ and Him alone, as He is offered to us in the Gospel. But faith is an act of which none can be cognizant but the soul and its God. So far as respects all other persons, angels or men, the transaction is secret. The universe, therefore, must have some other standard by which to *judge* of the creature than that of faith. A tree is not known by certain *hidden* qualities or substances, though these may give it life, but by its fruit. And the Apostle speaks with true inspiration when he says, show me thy faith without thy works and I will show thee my faith by my works. Works are the fruit which faith hangs out to the eye of the beholder. These two go together, they are never divorced, and yet faith is not work, neither is work faith. But as faith and works are inseparable and as the latter can be seen, while the former is invisible, it is but fair to the judge, to the spectators and to the party to be judged that the deeds done in the body should constitute *the rule of judgment*. For God has declared that there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known. And thus while we are justified by faith and faith only, yet we shall be *judged* hereafter by our



works. The books shall be opened and every one receive sentence according to that *he hath done*. Justification by faith is now, as ever, the sign of a standing or falling Church; but if faith and works are never disunited in the true child of God, it surely can breed no confusion in the final day to judge the tree by its fruits.

If what we have now said be true, then these apparently contradictory Scriptures are entirely harmonized. By faith we are *justified*, made at peace with God and admitted into the family of Christ; by *works* this great benefit become palpable, so that men take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus! While in the day of judgment, God's eye will look down at the heart and upon that faith which no eye but His can see, yet the judge in vindication of His righteous sentence shall point to those labors of love, those deeds done in the body, which are the works or fruits of belief, and which are manifest to the creature as well as the creator. Thus mercy and truth shall meet together, righteousness and peace shall kiss each other. Let every man, therefore, see to it that he have both faith and works. For without faith it is impossible to please God and yet faith *without works is dead*.

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